
****BO TALES****

Vol.5 No.1

The Newsletter of the Original Hobo Nickel Society

April 1996

INTRODUCING MR. NO NECK!



Lot #31, OHNS Auction, ANA '95



Fivaz Collection

KNOWN UNKNOWN ARTISTS by Bill "Zemo" Fivaz

This is the second in a short series of articles featuring coins carved by artists identifiable by their works, but not their names. In the last **Bo Tales**, I presented five nearly identical coins, all carved by an un-named artist we called "Peanut Ear" because of the shape of the ear on all his works. In this issue we meet "**No Neck**", an artist who has as one of his carving traits a very high collar on his subjects, giving the impression they have played offensive right tackle for the Green Bay Packers.

As on the five coins carved by "Peanut Ear", both of these are on 1913-P coins, both the type 1 variety.

The first was **Lot #31** in the OHNS ANA auction (F-109), and the second is one from my collection.

IN THIS ISSUE...

Known Unknown Artists #2
Classified Advertisements
New Hobo Nickel In The Printing
Letter From Amos E. Hill
ANA Auction Notice
Letter From Uncle Ray
Original Hobo Nickel Carver Identified
President's Message
Paid Advertisement - J&D Coins

Note the similarities:

1. The beard, ear and (crude) collar are virtually identical, with the ear extending over the hat brim on each.
2. The profile remains the same (unaltered) on each.
3. The hat brim is the same, and the zig-zag hatband is identical.
4. The collar area (between the two heavy lines) has been coarsely "dressed" on each, and the original Indian's feathers still appear at the back.

The two differences that I can detect are both very subtle:

1. The dome of the hat on F-109 is slightly higher than on the piece in my collection.
2. The punched beard and the hair on my coin has the opening to the right, like a "C", while the beard and hair F-109 is exactly the opposite, like a backward "C".



Fivaz Collection



F-109

I'll be reviewing the Non-Bo's and Bert's in my collection as well as the photos of those pieces I've certified to see if I can find others carved by "Known Unknown Artists". In the meantime, be on the lookout for more "No Neck" pieces.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Members will be allowed one free classified ad of 35 words or less each issue, space permitting. Ads must be submitted at least one month prior to the publication date, and **must be resubmitted for every issue** - no ad will be automatically renewed. Editing will be at the discretion of the editor. Send ads to OHNS Editor, P.O. Box 1051, Burlington, MA 01803. **For the next issue, your ad request must be in my hands no later than July 1, 1996.**

Modern Hobo Nickels: Hand-tooled, not machined. Excellent quality. **\$6.50 each plus postage.** Dealers welcomed. Free list with order or send long SASE. Ms. J. "Happy Hobo" Allen., RM #18, 2261 Monroe Ave. Rochester, NY 14618.

NEW HOBO NICKEL BOOK IN THE PRINTING

After nearly 15 years of waiting, Del "Slickrock" Romines has just informed us that the new hobo nickel book entitled *THE HOBO NICKEL* is presently at the printers and should be ready for shipment around the middle of May.

The material in the book contains material which was researched by "Slickrock" from 1978 through 1987. In early 1988 he sustained a severe back injury and had to give up the research. In 1988 his wife, Joyce Ann, picked up the study and started indexing the material. In late 1994 Joyce consolidated all of the research material into book form in the computer, and it was finalized in January 1996 and sent to the printer. The book should be in her hands no later than mid May.

The book will be an 8 1/2 x 11 softcover with approximately 135 pages and 400 to 500 photographs. It will retail for \$22.95 plus \$2.50 for postage and handling. Because of the limited printing, there may not be any offered through retail outlets unless the demand becomes much greater than the number in the initial printing. If this should be the case, a second printing would be made with some possible minor corrections and/or changes. Each book will be identified with a serial number which would not be used in the second printing, should one take place.

In addition to the updated hobo nickel information, a bonus section has been added at the rear of the book: a complete hobo argot (language) dictionary of 10 - 12 pages. Each term is given with it's normal usage or usages, a detailed explanation is then given for each term explaining how the term came about, and in many cases, the time span of the first known usages. The dictionary has been checked for proper terms,

usage, and completeness by several hoboos and by George Horton of Vinning, Iowa, the nation's best known hobo historian.

The information in the book is based on material gained and thoroughly researched from 1978 through 1995. This in-depth research corrects some of the information in the first book, and offers considerable new information. Information which was gained after the first book was published in 1981 has been cross-checked and sorted for accuracy of information. In some instances, considerable similar information was received from various sources. This information was sorted through and combined for the most likely correct information.

There is information on searching for hobo nickels, grading standards, category ratings with prices paid for the various category coins, related hobo information, and considerable other information which will be very helpful for those truly interested in hobo nickels and hobo research. Virtually all of the information relating to hoboos has been checked for content and accuracy. The book is laid out much the same as a dictionary with basically all terms which are presently being used in the hobo nickel field. Where possible, photographs are used with the various terms and explanations.

Joyce has agreed to offer the book to OHNS members for \$19.95 postpaid provided the order and payment is received by April 15th. This offer represents a savings of \$4.50. After that date, the price will revert back to \$22.95 plus \$2.50 for postage and handling (see advertisement for details). The maximum number of advanced orders of books that may be ordered by one member is five. Exceptions will be considered on an

individual basis if a written request is submitted. A similar advertisement will run concurrently with the OHNS advertisement in another publication as repayment for the assistance received from so many different hoboes. Because of their oth Del and Joyce request that **no phone calls be made about the book** due to their busy schedule.

Amos E Hill, RM #271 writes...

In the December 1995 issue of **Bo Tales**, your article inside the front cover indicates "So study the previous two catalogs, then study the new catalog and...etc." I have auction catalogs for August 19, 1995 and January 6, 1996. Am I missing a catalog! If so, how can I obtain a copy?

RE Grading of Hobo Nickels. Most of the time when two or more people look at a coin, there is a difference of what they see - check the comments by the Hobo Authenticators who have checked the nickels in the catalogs. When three authenticators check the same coin most times, maybe two will agree, but one will have a different opinion. What I am saying is leave your system on Hobo as it is now.

Look at the problems that arose, and as far as I am concerned, has not been corrected by the coin grading **EXPERTS** in the coin business. MS grading should have never been started. **STAY** with your present system. I have been collecting since 1936 and believe that **GREED** to be the reason for MS grading, and any person who feels he/she is an **EXPERT** has a case of blownup ego.

Mr Farnsworth, I am a little older and have lived through a part of Hobo times in the 1930's, 40's, 50's. I have seen many Hobos and have been in Hobo Jungles. These men were not **KNIGHTS**;

they were down and out people. We have the same class of people now in our times, they are mostly called Homeless or Street People, and were for the most part either little or non-educated. Nevertheless, they did leave the Hobo nickels for us to locate and admire.

Most of these carvings were crude because of the way they were made, with a pocket knife. These carvers sat on the ground or on a rock and held the coin on their knee, a rock, or a tree stump and did their carving. Most probably did not even know the composition of the metal they were carving.

Why is it that every time whenever there is a mention of the producer of what you and others refer to as "Neo-Bos", it is, I feel, with a negative attitude? These people are contributing to an old idea except, as modern technology permits, using modern tools. Besides, I believe old Bo also ground and whizzed a few of his nickels.

For some reason Mr. Ron Landis is held to be in a class above Bo and other old timers. Mr. Landis is an outstanding engraver and has produced beautiful engravings, but I don't feel his work should be in a class with Bo, Bert, and other old timers. He has a vice to hold the coin secure while carving; they did not have this luxury. His knives and carving tools are far superior in metal content and design than theirs were, and he is looking more for perfection than they did. I collect and admire his work, but feel he is in a little different class. I have quite a few of Mr. Brazzell's carvings of Hobo nickels and feel although he uses a different method of carving, his work is quite good. At this time, I do not have any of Ms. J. "Happy Hobo" Allen's work, but I do intend to add her work to my collection. If you or anyone can advise me of others who are

producing Hobo nickels, I would appreciate the information.

I am a member of the Hobo Nickel Society, hope to remain, but I have had my say. You may print if you wish, there may be other members who have their own ideas.

Sincerely,
Amos E. Hill, RM 271

Editor's response...

Question on catalogs...

OHNS has had three auctions to date: January 1995, August 1995, and January 1996. To receive past catalogs (as well as past issues of **Bo Tales**) I would suggest that you place a classified ad in **Bo Tales** offering to buy a copy.

Statement on authentications...

The only time that a hobo nickel is viewed by three authenticators is when the first two disagree on whether a given carving is original or modern (neo-bo). While I do not have the statistics before me, I would make an educated guess that the first two authenticators disagree on the authenticity of fewer than ten per cent of the coins.

Statement on negative attitude on Neo-Bos...

Most of the people in the club have a strong interest in **original** carvings. The authentication program was set up to verify (authenticate) whether a given carving is recent (a Neo-Bo) or an older carving (an original). Many of our members also collect recent carvings as J. Allen and R. Landis can testify. While the the **Original** Hobo Nickel Society emphasizes original carvings, it is **not** our intent to put down recent carvings.

Thank you for the nice informative letter. I agree with most of your

comments. Perhaps Ron Landis and/or J. Allen might be willing to write a detailed pictured article on how they carve hobo nickels.

ANA AUCTION NOTICE

The fourth OHNS auction will take place at the ANA Convention in Denver and is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, Aug 17th. The same rules will apply to this auction as was used in the previous three auctions. The deadline for submitting original **authenticated** hobo nickels is **April 25th**. For **unauthenticated** carvings, the deadline is **April 12th**. Be sure to indicate that the submitted nickels are for the auction. Include a check or money order for \$15 per unauthenticated coin submitted. Only those that are certified to be original will be accepted for consignment.

As before, the buyer's fee will be 10% and the consigner's fee will be 5% of the hammer price. A catalog will be printed and sent to all paid-up OHNS members. Only OHNS members may consign and only OHNS members may bid. Both mail order and floor bids will be received.

Consignors should send the nickels via **insured** mail to:

Bill Fivaz
P.O. Box 888660
Dunwoody, GA 30356-0660

Uncle Ray writes...

On page four of the February, 1995 issue of **Bo Tales** Stephen Alpert, LM #10 requests information about the first hobo nickels. The Johnson Smith Company listed Yiddish nickels per Night owl Auction #211 (pictured in the same issue) in their catalogs back in the 1930's.

ORIGINAL HOBO NICKEL CARVER IDENTIFIED!
(HOWARD HUGHES - REALLY!!)
by Bill Fivaz

Several years ago I purchased about 40 original, carved Hobo Nickels from a midwestern dealer which were, among other things, a series of American Cowboys, each with a name on the 2X2 holder. There was "Slim", "Pecos Bill", "Tex", etc., and another series of famous personalities such as Sammy Davis, Jr., Ronald Reagan, *Mr. Spock*, Chas. DeGaulle, LBJ, etc. Fortunately, I was able to obtain the name and address of the person who carved these pieces from the dealer, but up until now, I never tried to establish contact.

The gentleman's name is **Howard Hughes**, and he resides in California. After about 12 years of procrastination, I took a chance that Mr. Hughes was still with us and still at the same address. I wrote to him in mid-December, asking several questions, and asking permission to use the information, if he did reply, in a future issue of **Bo Tales**. I was absolutely delighted when I heard from him shortly afterward, and even more thrilled when he said that I may use his answers in an article.

Here are the questions I asked, followed by Mr. Hughes' responses:

Q. When did you start carving, and were you ever a "knight of the road"?

A. "I did not start carving on nickels until sometime in the 1970's. No, I was never a "knight of the road". I was a brakeman on the Valley Division of the Santa Fe Railroad for the past 40 years."

Q. Are you still carving? If not, approximately when did you stop?

A. "No, I am not still carving. I stopped a couple years ago. In fact, some of the carvings that you have are some of my last."

Q. What is your estimate as to how many nickels you carved over the years?

A. "I would say some 350-400 carvings overall."

Q. What techniques (tools) did you utilize?

A. "The tools that I used were self-made. Mostly small chisels made from jewelers screwdrivers."

Q. Approximately how long did it take you to carve a coin?

A. "Depends on the subject...anywhere from 1/2 day to two days."

Q. All the coins I purchased have a very dark appearance; did you apply something to them after they were carved?

A. "I would heat the coin then drop it in motor oil. That gave it a darker look."

Q. Did you know any hoboes who carved coins in the 1920-1950 period, and if so, do you remember their names?

A. "I have met some of the old originals at different times, like Hood River Blackie. As a brakeman, you see a lot of different (kinds) - some Bo's, but mostly winos."

Q. What got you interested (started) in carving, and did you ever carve on coins/items other than Buffalo Nickels?

A. "I don't really know just what got me interested in carving nickels. I have always been interested in miniature projects."

Q. I notice that virtually all your works are identified by your "HH" monogram on the reverse. Did you always "sign" those you carved?

A. "The first 50-60 carvings did not have the "HH" monogram.

"When I was young I did ride the freights quite often - the Rock Island - Frisco, and even the Katy a time or two. It was just something to do. In those days there wasn't much a young boy could do. I was in the service in 1943 in Europe, in the 517th Parachute Infantry.

"After the war I went to work for Santa Fe and worked there until retirement. My hands are not in good shape at the present, but I may try to do some more carving if time permits."

After hearing back from Howard, I wrote again, thanking him, and asked a few more questions.

I asked him if "Hood River Blackie" was a carver of nickels. He replied: "No, 'Hood River Blackie' did not carve as far as I know. He was more of a story teller."

I also asked if he ever came across George Washington "Bo" Hughes or Bert Weigand. Howard responded: "No, I did not know George Washington Hughes or Bert Weigand; have only heard of them lately. As you probably know, the regular Bos don't talk that much. Back in 1939-40 when I used to ride on the Southern Pacific from Phoenix to Imperial Valley, CA and back, we used to have a wait east of Yuma, AZ a few miles to be able to get a train to Phoenix which is on a branch line on the Southern Pacific.

You see, when you're a teenager, the Bo's know that you are not one of them, so they don't tell you but very little. Although I did learn one thing, and that was how to sleep out in cold weather and sleep comfortable with nothing but newspapers and cardboard boxes. Quite a deal, but it works."

In my last letter to this most interesting gentleman, I told him I had given him a year's membership in OHNS so he could enjoy each issue of **Bo Tales** and read this article on himself. I'm so glad I was able to establish contact with this interesting and obviously well-traveled gentleman.



"Slim"



"Pecos Bill"



"Tex"



Sammy Davis, Jr.



Ronald Reagan



"Mr. Spock"



Chas. DeGaulle



L.B.J.

PRESIDENT's MESSAGE

by Bill "Zemo" Fivaz

This is my first opportunity to address you as the incoming President of OHNS, and one of the first things I'd like to do is to thank those very dedicated OHNS officers who guided our club for the past couple of years. Kudos to **Dallas "Colonel" Shaw**, our outgoing President, who led us to a membership of over 300 collectors, ably assisted by Secretary **Gail "Bo-ette" Kraljevich**, who has been instrumental in signing up more new members than anyone else in the club by her attendance and programs on Hobo Nickels at various coin conventions, etc.

James "Dictator" Taylor was the keeper of the loot as Treasurer, **Chuck "Buddha" Irwin** served as Sergeant at Arms, and **Don "Sport" Farnsworth** held down the very important responsibility of **Bo Tales** Editor.

My thanks to each and every one of these people for a job well done! We have to remember that these positions are filled on a volunteer basis, with no compensation at all for any of the officers. However, the satisfaction derived from a job well done is usually reward enough for these fine folks. **Thanks again, everyone!**

As president, I feel it is important to have certain goals to strive for during my tenure. The first involves membership. At the end of 1996, I'd like to see a paid up membership in OHNS of **400**. In this regard, I'd like to issue a challenge to each member reading this message. That challenge is to **sign up at least one new member by the end of the Summer ANA in Denver in August**. Just imagine, if each of you would accept this challenge, we could double our membership! It won't happen, however, if you are not pro-active and do it yourself. Don't wait for John or Fred or Mary to do it...my challenge is for **YOU** to do it! How 'bout it? I've asked your editor to include a membership application in this issue so there'll be no excuse...let's see how many we can sign up!

Secondly, I'd like to spread the word about OHNS through articles in the numismatic press and through programs put on by the members at their coin club meetings, etc. I have four different slide programs on Hobo Nickels that may be used (two with cassette tapes and the other two with texts to make it foolproof for you). Just drop

me a note and ask for a slide list, and I'll get it out to you.

Finally, the **Bo Tales** editor desperately needs articles for the three issues of the magazine each year. I'd like to ask any of you who feel so inclined (and even those of you who don't!), to write a little something and send it to:

Don "Sport" Farnsworth
P.O. Box 1059
Burlington, MA 01803

It doesn't have to be long or technical - something as easy as "My Favorite Hobo Nickel and How He Found Me!" would be great. Or how about a fictitious, humorous one on "How to do a Number on Your Hands (or My First Attempt to Hand Carve a Hobo Nickel!)". Use your imagination and see what you can come up with - believe me, it'll be fun! My last comment involves the new book on Hobo Nickels that Del Romines has at the printers. Hopefully, it will be out shortly after you read this. Watch for announcements on this first book on Hoboes in 15 years. You'll love it, I know.

Until the next **Bo Tales** (due in the mail to you in late July), watch your step getting on that fast freight, keep your bindlestick by your side at all times, and above all, save some of that Mulligan Stew for me!

Paid Advertisement

NEW HOBO NICKEL BOOK

"THE HOBO NICKEL"

Compiled by Joyce Ann Romines
Researched by Del Romines

The new hobo nickel book is presently being printed, and will retail for \$22.95 plus postage and handling. Advance orders at a discount will be made for OHNS members. **All orders and payments received from OHNS members by 15 April, 1996 will receive the book for \$19.95 postage paid.** You will receive the first books shipped from the printers.

Orders received after 15 April, 1996 will cost \$22.95 plus \$2.50 postage and handling. **Please state OHNS membership number.** Also specify **how many books** (up to five) you would like. Make all checks/money orders payable to:

J&D COINS
P.O. Box 1586
Tucker, GA 30085-1586

ORIGINAL HOBO NICKEL SOCIETY

SUBMISSION FORM FOR REGISTRATION/CERTIFICATION

This certification service for Hobo Nickels and Hobo Carvings is provided for members and non-members of the Original Hobo Nickel Society. It is an independent opinion on the authenticity of any Hobo Carving on a U.S. Coin, specifically, if it is felt to be original (that is, carved during the 1913 - 1980 period). If determined to be a "Neo-Bo," produced recently (usually from 1981 to the present), the coin will not receive a registration number. All submissions will be reviewed by two authenticators and will receive a completed form, photo, and quality grade.

No refunds will be made.

PLEASE SUBMIT ONE FORM WITH EACH COIN TO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AUTHENTICATORS:

Del Romines
P.O. Box 1586
Tucker, GA 30085-1586

Bill Fivaz
P.O. Box 888660
Dunwoody, GA 30356-0660

Gail Kraljevich
P.O. Box 43
Malvern, PA 19355

Owner's name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: (Optional) _____

Owner's value of coin (this information is necessary for insurance): \$ _____

OHNS Member? (circle one) Yes No Membership # _____

Registration/Certification fee structure

(Please make all checks payable to: Original Hobo Nickel Society)

Members: \$15.00 per coin* Non-members: \$25.00 per coin*

*Includes postage and insurance up to \$100.00.

For coins valued over \$100.00 by the owner, please enclose sufficient funds for insurance and Registration/Certification.

ALL SUBMISSIONS WHETHER DEEMED TO BE "ORIGINAL" OR "NEO-BOS" (1981 TO PRESENT) WILL BE PHOTOGRAPHED AND REGISTERED (1) OR CERTIFIED (2).

- (1) REGISTERED - Certified as an original (1913-1980) piece and assigned a registration number (with photo).
(2) CERTIFIED - Certified as a "neo-bo" (1981 to present) with no registration number (with photo).

I understand that the opinion rendered by the examiner on my submission is strictly that, an opinion, and is not a guarantee that the item is genuine. It is however, the best considered judgement by qualified specialists in the area, but others may reach different conclusions.

No warranties are expressed or implied from any opinion rendered.

I authorize the OHNS to use a photograph of this coin and my name (name only, not address) in BO TALES or other club related areas if it so desires.

PHOTO

☐

YES

☐

NO

NAME

☐

YES

☐

NO

Signature of Submitter

Date

OHNS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

_____ Please enroll me as a member in the Original Hobo Nickel Society, Inc. as indicated.

_____ Please renew my membership (member number _____) as indicated.

_____ Regular (@\$10 per year) _____ Life (\$150) _____ Youth under 19 (\$5)

_____ I'm enclosing an additional \$12, please send me the club tee-shirt size _____

I am also enclosing a donation of _____ for the OHNS YN Scholarship program

NAME: _____ Moniker (Nickname): _____

ADDRESS: _____

I agree to abide by the Society's Code of Ethics.

Signature: _____

Make checks payable to: The Original Hobo Nickel Society

Please send to OHNS Attention: "Bo-ette," PO Box 1409, Malvern, PA 19355

YOUR BOARD

President	Bill "Zemo" Fivaz
Past President	Dallas "Colonel" Shaw
Vice President	Ray "Wrench" Flanagan
Secretary	Gail "Bo-ette" Kraljevich
Treasurer	Chuck "Buddha" Irwin
Sergeant-At-Arms	James "Dictator" Taylor
Editor, Bo Tales	Don "Sport" Farnsworth

COMMITTEES

Honorary Vice President	Del "Slickrock" Romines
Education	Don "Sport" Farnsworth
Publicity	Ray "Wrench" Flanagan
Authentication	Del "Slickrock" Romines
	Bill "Zemo" Fivaz
	Gail "Bo-ette" Kraljevich
	Don "Sport" Farnsworth

****BO TALES****

The Newsletter of the...

ORIGINAL HOBO NICKEL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 1409

Malvern, PA 19355